

Red Cross exposed as scam in searing investigation published by ProPublica

(NaturalNews) A pair of massive, once-in-a-generation storms lambasted regions of the U.S., leaving in their wake destruction, some death and havoc. Hundreds of thousands of people were without food, shelter and power, many for weeks on end.

But Americans responded like they always do after such disasters, whether they occur on home soil or abroad: They opened up their pocketbooks and donated to charities ostensibly aimed at helping victims.

In particular, according to a recent investigative report by *ProPublica* and *National Public Radio*, Americans sent the Red Cross hundreds of millions of dollars because they believed that their donations would be well used to relieve the suffering of victims pounded by Superstorm Sandy and Hurricane Isaac.

It didn't happen. Per the report:

The Red Cross botched key elements of its mission after Sandy and Isaac, leaving behind a trail of unmet needs and acrimony, according to an investigation.... The charity's shortcomings were detailed in confidential reports and internal emails, as well as accounts from current and former disaster relief specialists.

"Multiple systems failed"

In addition, the investigation found that Red Cross officials in the nation's capital deepened the charity's incoherent response by "diverting assets for public relations purposes," according to [this internal Red Cross report](#). Furthermore, the distribution of relief supplies was "politically driven."

Red Cross supervisors during Isaac directed dozens of trucks that are most commonly used to deliver aid to be driven around mostly empty, "just to be seen," according to one of the drivers, Jim Dunham.

"We were sent way down on the Gulf with nothing to give," Dunham told investigative reporters. In many ways, he added, the Red Cross's relief effort was "worse than the storm."

During Sandy, which ravaged the East Coast, emergency vehicles were diverted from relief work to be used as props for press conferences, which angered disaster response personnel who were attempting to mitigate the storm's damaging effects.

Following both storms, the investigative report continued, problems inherent in the [Red Cross](#) left a number of victims in dangerous circumstances in which they were vulnerable to harm, as the charity's internal assessments even stated. For example, victims who were handicapped "slept in their wheelchairs for days," because Red Cross officials had failed to secure adequate numbers of cots.

Also, in one shelter, sex offenders were "all over including playing in [a] children's area," because Red Cross workers "didn't know/follow procedures."

The investigative report further states:

According to interviews and documents, the Red Cross lacked basic supplies like food, blankets and batteries to distribute to victims in the days just after the storms. Sometimes, even when supplies were plentiful, they went to waste. In one case, the Red Cross had to throw out tens of thousands of meals because it couldn't find the people who needed them.

Hardly "near flawless"

As it usually does, the Red Cross managed to assemble a small army of volunteers for the disasters. But, as the

investigative report found, many of them were ill-used or misdirected by management personnel. Following Sandy, for instance, volunteers meandered through the streets of New York in search of neighborhoods that had been hit but lost their way because they had not been given GPS equipment to guide them.

And as he so often does, President Obama -- the Red Cross's honorary chairman -- came out on the wrong side of an issue; he publicly endorsed the charity following [Superstorm Sandy](#), assuring the American people that the "Red Cross knows what they're doing."

Moreover, two weeks after Sandy, the charity's chief executive, Gail McGovern, said the group's relief efforts had been "near flawless."

But self-assessments were far less congratulatory.

"Multiple systems failed," say the minutes of a closed-door meeting of top Red Cross officials in December 2012, in reference to operational logistics.

"We didn't have the kind of sophistication needed for this size job," noted a Red Cross vice president in the same meeting, according to the minutes. See them here: [Propublica.org](#).

Sources:

<http://www.npr.org>

<http://www.propublica.org>

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